

STRATEGIC PLANNING

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Lately I've been helping a lot of friends with decisions. The common theme I've found is that **they thought they had only two options.**

That's not a decision. That's a self-created dilemma! The way out is to realize **there are always more than two options!**

Backing up: When someone says they only have one option, they're really saying, "I have no choice," and you know that's wrong. (At very least, add "do nothing" and "go insane" as choices.)

When they say they only have two options, beware. It means they got stuck. Once people get two options, they start comparing the pros and cons of those two, and forget to think of more options.

But remember those silly creative brainstorming exercises we did as kids? As adults, people let the "real world" wear them down so much, they forgot that those lessons were not just for kids.

As an example, a friend was trying to decide between:

1. sticking with his well-paying boring job
2. or quitting to start his own company

I suggested some other options:

- Fully delegate your new company. Just fund it and direct it. Hire a manager that understands your vision, and spend only an hour a day overseeing it.
- Bring your new company idea to your boss, and propose it as a division of their company, so you can stay on salary.
- Go into work 2 hours early, but spend the first 2 hours just setting up your new company. Use lunch breaks and downtime as well. Do this until the income from the new company is 50% of your salary, then quit.
- Rent out your house for a year and be a house-sitter, to reduce your living expenses to almost-nothing, and take a year-long sabbatical, reading and learning as much as possible about this new industry you want to go into, so you can attack it with more confidence in a year when you return.
- Decide this new business is a hobby, not a business. But you hate your existing job anyway, so find a new job that would allow you the flexibility to spend a good part of each day or week on this new hobby that makes you happy.
- Go work for the leader in the field of your new company. Learn even more about that industry so when you're ready to launch your new company, you're doing it with full strategic advantage and connections.

- Be the worst employee ever, and show up to your boring job every day but refuse to do any work. Pretend to be super-busy all the time, but really just be working on your own company, on their dime. Use every sick-day and vacation day until scolded. Do this until fired.
- Do neither, and move to New Zealand's South Island to be a tour guide on the hiking trails.
- etc.

Some of those are intentionally silly, but made him say, “You made me realize I need a vacation before making a decision. I'm just feeling really stressed because of this new manager at work, and I was wanting a quick exit, but I think I need to confront this manager about our bad communication. It wasn't the new business that was inspiring me so much, but just needing to fix my current situation.”

Anyway - to my other friends out there who haven't come to me with decisions yet: **Great insight only comes from opening your mind to many options. Brainstorm them all, from the hybrids to the ridiculous.**

It takes under an hour, but has always helped my friends feel less stressed, think clearly, and honestly - get *excited* about a decision that used to feel like a dilemma.

